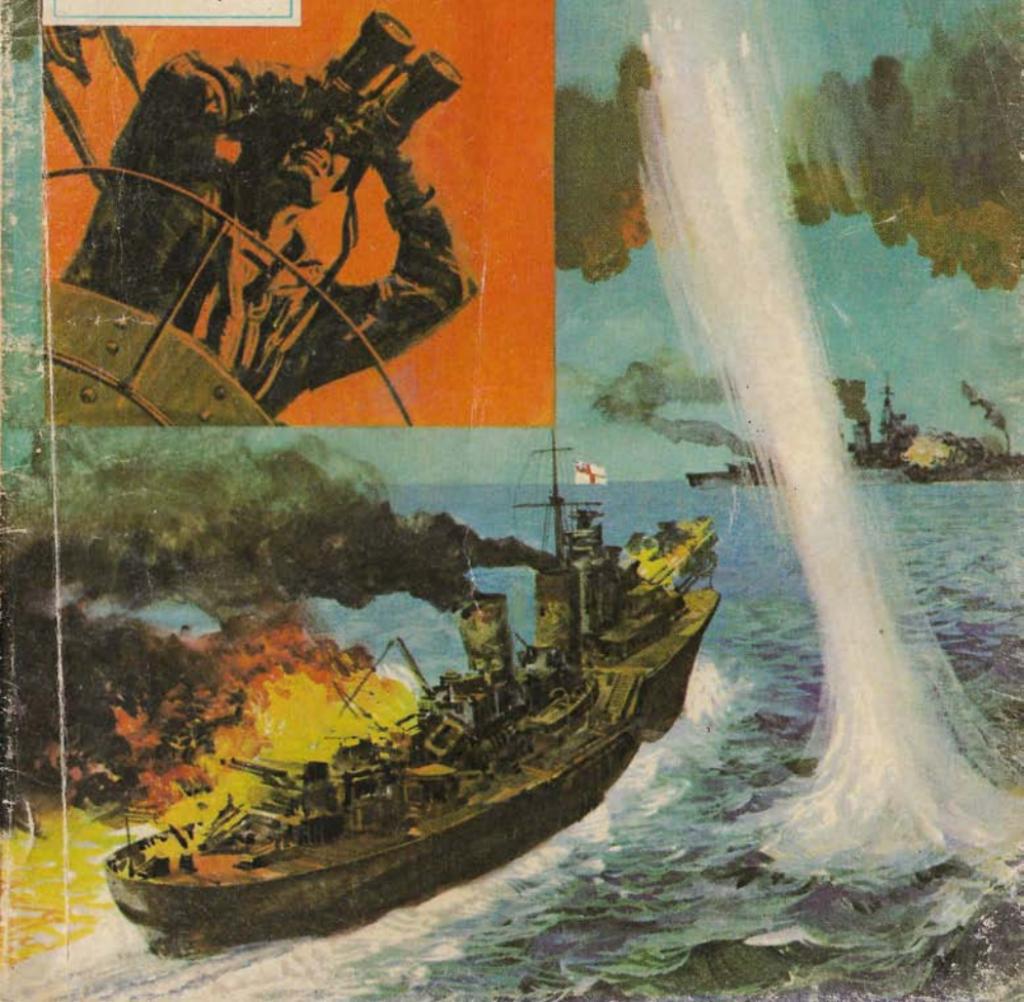


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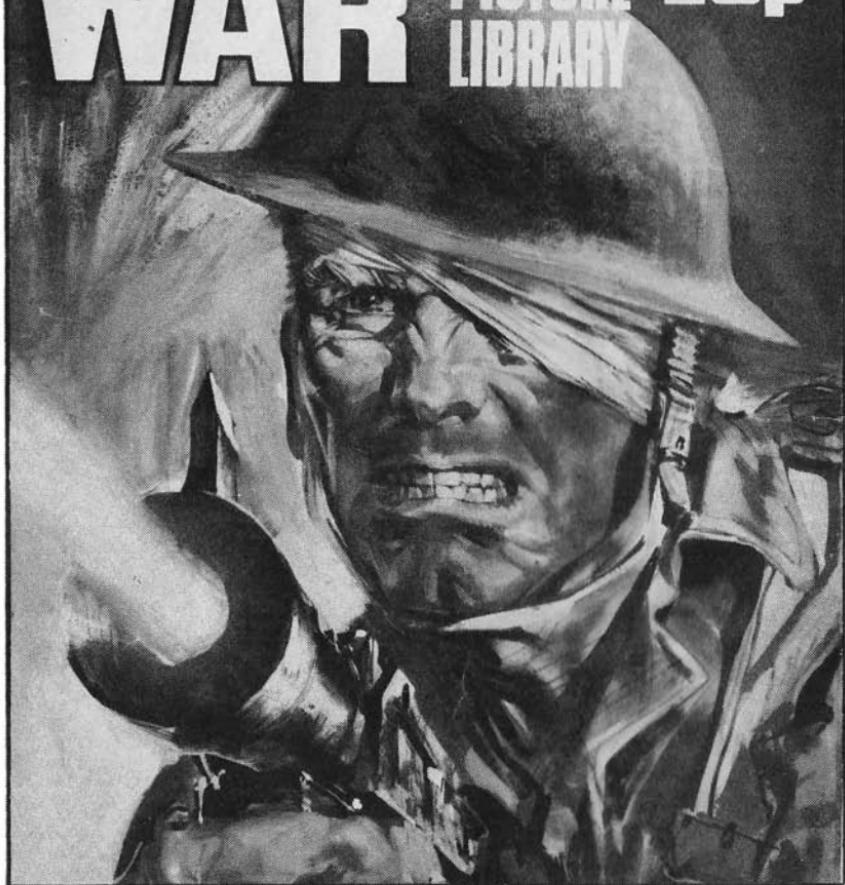
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**THE
BLOCKSHIP**



HOLIDAY SPECIAL

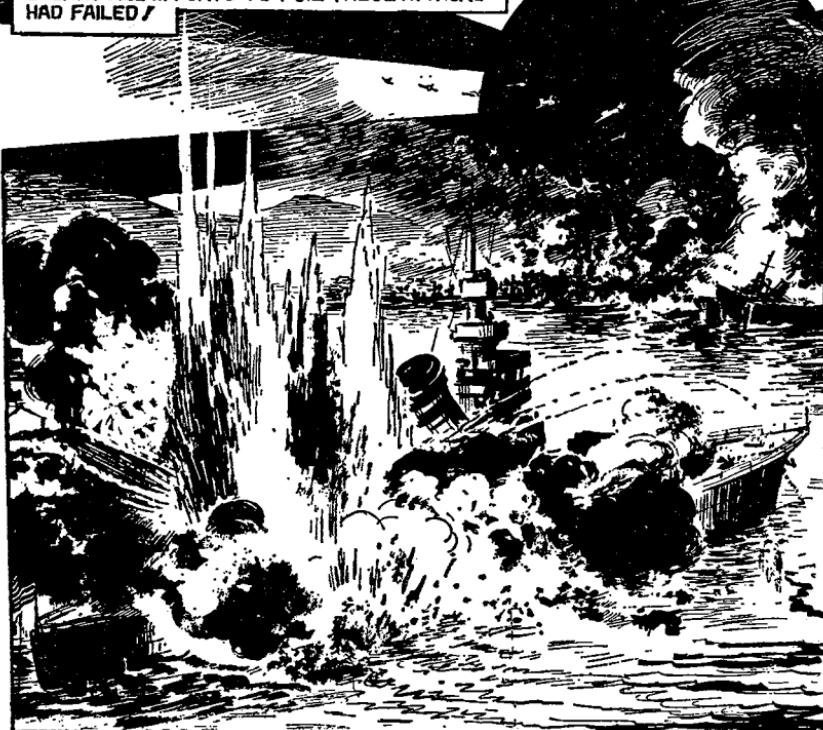
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ON SALE NOW!

The BLOCKSHIP

THE TREACHEROUS ATTACK AT PEARL HARBOUR, ON 7TH DECEMBER, 1942, GAVE JAPAN CONTROL OF THE PACIFIC. IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOWED, THE IMPERIAL NAVY STRUCK MANY DEVASTATING BLOWS AT ALLIED SHIPPING AND SHORE BASES, BEFORE DISAPPEARING IN THE VASTNESS OF THE OCEAN. ALL EFFORTS TO FOIL THESE ATTACKS HAD FAILED!



PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED JUNE 1967

Chapter I. LIEUTENANT MISFIT

ONE MORNING IN MAY, 1943, AT AN ALLIED BASE IN NEW GUINEA, A BRAWNY YOUNG AUSTRALIAN NAVAL GUNNER NAMED "BIG BILL" BOWIE, WAS SUDDENLY AND UNEXPECTEDLY PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT...



BUT WHEN BIG BILL SHUFFLED AWKWARDLY INTO HIS OFFICE, ADMIRAL KEENE WAS TOO STUNNED TO DELIVER A REPRIMAND FOR HOLDING UP THE TOP LEVEL CONFERENCE.

THIS IS BOWIE, SIR! HE'S BEEN MADE AN OFFICER FOR THIS MISSION, AS YOU ORDERED.

EM-YES-SO I DID!
BUT I EXPECTED SOMEONE
A LITTLE MORE - ER-UM,
RESPECTABLE!

SORRY FOR THE WAY I LOOK, SIR! I DON'T REALLY GO MUCH ON THIS OFFICER LARK, ANYHOW!

CAPTAIN PRYDE, THE ADMIRAL'S AIDE, HASTILY INTERVENED ...

I SHOULD EXPLAIN, SIR, THAT BOWIE IS AN AUSTRALIAN. HASN'T QUITE ADJUSTED TO NAVY DISCIPLINE. BUT HE DOES KNOW THE SMALLER ISLANDS ...

WITH AN EFFORT, ADMIRAL KEENE IGNORED BIG BILL'S BRASHNESS ...

YOU WERE SELECTED - EM - LIEUTENANT, BECAUSE YOUR RECORD SUGGESTS YOU'RE THE MAN WE NEED. I WANT YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS GROUP OF SMALL ISLANDS AND REPORT BACK TO ME. UNDERSTAND?

WHATEVER YOU SAY, ADMIRAL!

SHOULD DO! SPENT THE LAST TEN YEARS PLYING BETWEEN EM. THEN THE NIPS SUNK MY BOAT. 'AVEN'T FORGIVEN 'EM FOR THAT, NEITHER!

FURTHER BRIEFING FOLLOWED AND THEN BOWIE WAS DISMISSED...

I RECKON I'VE JUST MADE THE BIGGEST MISTAKE OF MY LIFE.

I'M NOT SO SURE, ADMIRAL! I'VE GOTTA STRANGE FEELING THAT GUY IS GONNA WORK THE ORACLE!

AS THEY WERE TAKEN TO THE NEARBY AIRSTRIP, BOWIE QUESTIONED THE STERN-FACED CAPTAIN ABOUT THE MISSION.

HOW DID WE GET ON TO THESE ISLANDS, CAPTAIN?

ONE OF OUR SUBS SPOTTED A STRONG JAP NAVAL SQUADRON NEAR THEM. TRIED TO HAVE A CLOSER LOOK BUT CAME UNDER HEAVY ATTACK. WE THINK IT COULD BE THEIR MAIN BASE.

WHY DON'T WE JUST GO IN THERE AND CLOBBER THE PLACE?

DON'T BE A FOOL, MAN! THESE THINGS HAVE TO BE PLANNED. ADMIRAL KEENE THINKS YOUR SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE ISLANDS WILL HELP HIM FIND A WAY OF ATTACKING THIS JAPANESE BASE — IF THERE'S ONE THERE!

WITH MISGIVINGS, CAPTAIN PRYDE LEFT BOWIE WITH THE AIRCRAFT'S CREW.

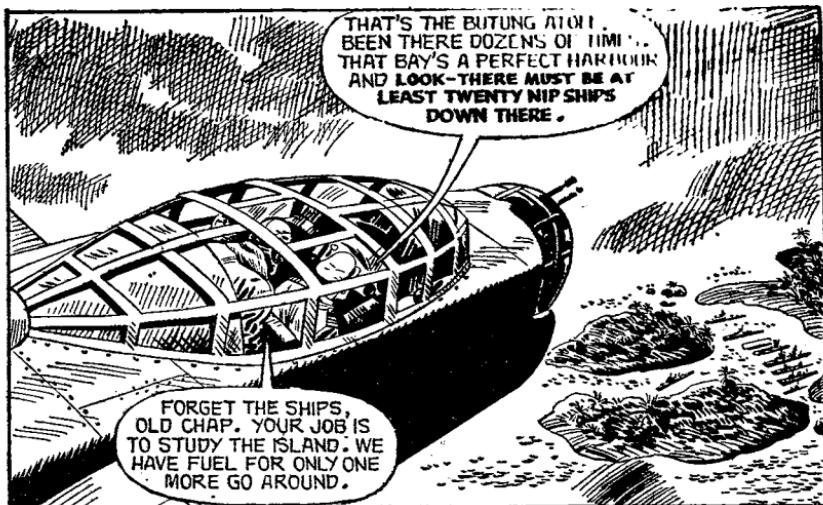


AT LAST, THE LANCASTER TOOK OFF, ROARING OUT INTO THE VAST EXPANSE OF THE PACIFIC.



FOR HOURS THE HUGE BOMBER DRONED EASTWARDS. THEN, FAR INTO THE NIGHT, THE PILOT WOKE BOWIE ...





JUST AS THEY TOUCHED DOWN AT THE BASE, BOWIE AWOKE...

THANKS FOR THE RIDE,
SKIPPER. ALTHOUGH I DIDN'T
KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE
RETURN TRIP!

JUST HOPE YOU HAVE SOMETHING
WORTH TELLING THE TOP BRASS! THEY'LL
WANT THEIR MONEY'S WORTH.



SECONDS LATER, CAPTAIN PRYDE WAS STARING AT THE DISHEVELLED
LIEUTENANT DISTASTEFULLY...

HOP IN, BOWIE.
ADMIRAL KEENE
WANTS TO SEE YOU
RIGHT AWAY.

STONE THE
FLIPPING CROWS, SIR.
I HAVEN'T HAD MY
BREAKFAST YET.



THE ADMIRAL WAS WAITING TO RECEIVE BIG BILL, IMPATIENT TO KNOW THE RESULTS OF THE RECONNAISSANCE.



BUT BIG BILL BOWIE WAS NOT A MAN TO BE DISMISSED EASILY — EVEN BY AN ADMIRAL!

YOU WANT TO CATCH THOSE NIPS, SIR, BUT A LARGE TASK FORCE COULDN'T GET WITHIN A HUNDRED MILES WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED, AND IT'S OUT OF RANGE OF THE HEAVIEST BOMBERS. SUPPOSING THE JAPS COULDN'T GET OUT...?

THAT'S ENOUGH, BOWIE! YOU'RE BEING IMPERTINENT —

WAIT! LET HIM FINISH. YOU HAVE SOMETHING IN MIND, LIEUTENANT?

SINK A BOAT, A SMALL TUG WOULD DO, AT THE MOUTH OF THE INLET AND NOTHING COULD GET THROUGH THAT NARROW CHANNEL. THE NIPS WOULD BE TRAPPED LONG ENOUGH FOR YOUR BIG SHIPS TO MOVE IN FOR THE KILL!

PERHAPS YOU CAN ALSO TELL US HOW WE GET A TUG BOAT A THOUSAND MILES INTO JAP WATERS AND SCUTTLE HER RIGHT UNDER THEIR IMPERIAL NOSES?

COULD BE DONE AT NIGHT, SIR.
TRICKIEST PART WILL BE DODGING
JAPANESE PATROLS. BUT I'M SURE
THE NIPS WON'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION
TO ONE LITTLE TUG BOAT. WHEN THE
OPERATION'S OVER, YOUR SHIPS COULD
PICK UP THE CREW.



BOWIE ALMOST CONVINCED THE ADMIRAL,
BUT THE OTHERS WERE DOUBTFUL AND
IT WAS DECIDED TO CONSIDER THE PLAN
IN MORE DETAIL.

DON'T THINK TOO
LONG, ADMIRAL. THE
NIPS WON'T WAIT TILL
YOU'RE READY!

YOU'VE SAID
QUITE ENOUGH,
BOWIE!



FOR TWO DAYS, BOWIE WAITED FOR THE ADMIRAL'S DECISION. AT LAST IT CAME.

ATTENTION!
LIEUTENANT BOWIE,
OUTSIDE WITH
CAPTAIN PRYDE!





BIG BILL FLARED UP AT THAT ...

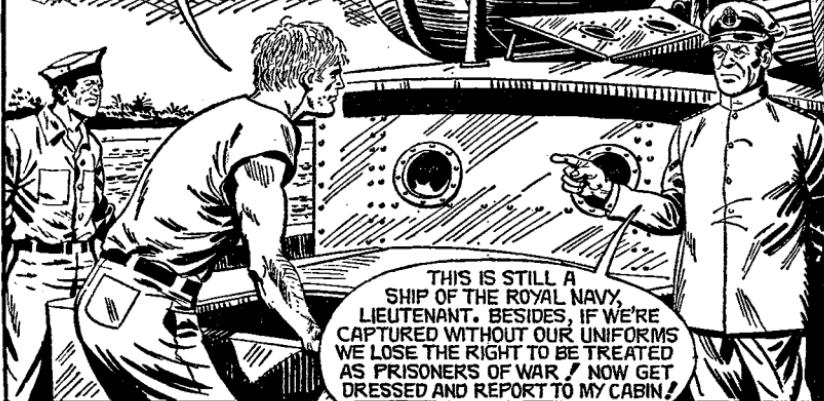


JUST BEFORE DARK, WITH A CREW OF EIGHT, THE TUG PARRY BEGAN IT'S LONG ONE-WAY VOYAGE.



THEY HAD BEEN AT SEA ONLY A FEW HOURS WHEN BOWIE CLASHED WITH 'KYDE AGAIN...

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I'M IMI'KOPERLY DRESSED? WE VAIN'T GO STRUTTING AROUND IN UNII ORMS. JAPS WOULD SPOT 'EM A MILE OFF!"



"THIS IS STILL A SHIP OF THE ROYAL NAVY, LIEUTENANT. BESIDES, IF WE'RE CAPTURED WITHOUT OUR UNIFORMS WE LOSE THE RIGHT TO BE TREATED AS PRISONERS OF WAR. NOW GET DRESSED AND REPORT TO MY CABIN!"

ANXIOUS NOT TO JEOPARDISE THE MISSION, BOWIE KEPT HIS TEMPER AND DID AS HE WAS ORDERED.

"HM! NOT MUCH BETTER THAN BEFORE. NOW LISTEN, BOWIE—HERE'S WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO. I'VE DECIDED TO HUG THE COAST-LINE. I KNOW THIS PART OF NEW GUINEA IS OCCUPIED AND WE COULD BE SEEN BY JAP SHORE BATTERIES. BUT I'D RATHER RISK THEM THAN BE CAUGHT BY THEIR DIVE BOMBERS!"

PRYDE TALKED FOR TWENTY MINUTES—AND BILL JUST LISTENED DUTIFULLY...

"REMEMBER, BOWIE. I LIKE A NUMBER ONE WHO OBEYS MY ORDERS, INSTANTLY!"

"AYE AYE, SIR! I'LL TAKE FIRST WATCH THEN."



WITH DAYLIGHT CAME THE DANGER OF ATTACK.

JAPS COULD BE OVER THERE NOW, WATCHING US. FAIR GIVES ME THE CREEPS, SIR.

IF THEY ARE WATCHING, AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT FIRING. LET'S JUST HOPE IT STAYS THAT WAY!



BUT THE PEACEFULNESS WAS SUDDENLY DISPelled — AS A SHELL FROM A SHORE BATTERY LANDED CLOSE TO THE PARRY!

HARD TO PORT!

AYE AYE, SIR!



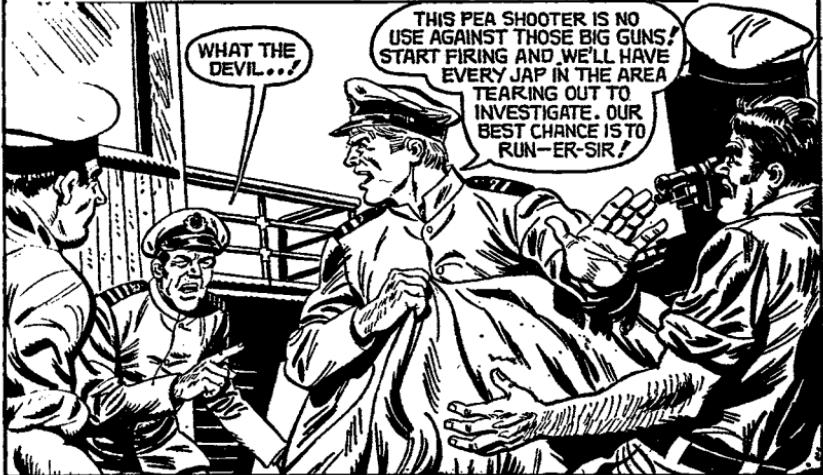
THE EXPLOSION BROUGHT CAPTAIN PRYDE ON DECK. AT ONCE HE RUSHED TO THE OERLIKON GUN.

ACTION STATIONS!

NO, SIR! DON'T FIRE THAT GUN.



WITHOUT THINKING, BILL PULLED CAPTAIN PRYDE AWAY FROM THE GUN.



I VERY RIVET IN THE OLD TUG SEEMED TO SHAKE AS HER ENGINE THROBBED INTO MAXIMUM EFFORT.



Chapter 2. ABANDONED!

LATER, BOWIE WAS GLAD OF A CHANCE TO SNATCH SOME SLEEP. BUT HE WAS VIOLENTLY AWAKENED BY THE CRASH OF GLASS AND CRACK OF BULLETS AGAINST THE BULKHEAD . . .



HE STUMBLED ON DECK TO FIND EVERYONE SEARCHING DESPERATELY FOR ANY COVER THEY COULD FIND.





"PRYDE RACED ON DECK TO MAN THE GUN, BOWIE SHOUTED ORDERS TO THE ENGINE ROOM.

BRIDGE
HERE. I WANT
ALL THE SMOKE
YOU CAN
MAKE!



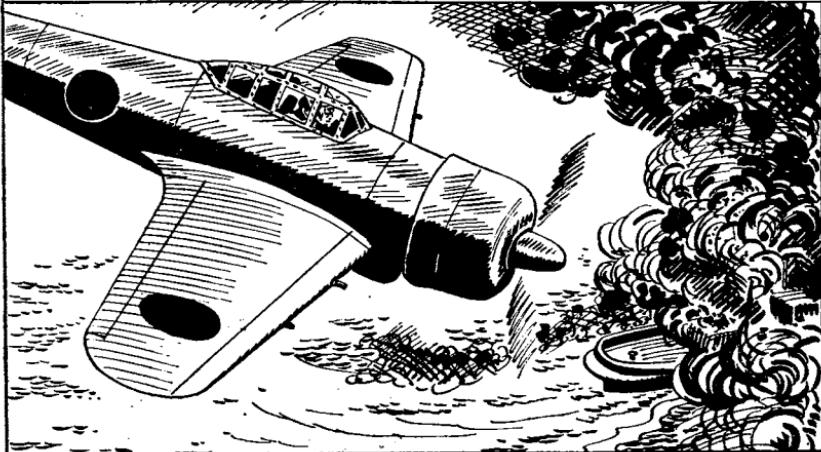
HARD A-PORT!
AND HOLD IT THERE.
KEEP HER GOING
AROUND IN
CIRCLES!

IN CIRCLES!
AYE AYE, SIR,
CIRCLES IT IS!





THE JAP PILOT CAME AROUND TO MAKE HIS THIRD ATTACK JUST IN TIME TO SEE HIS EASY TARGET VANISH INTO THE DENSE CLOUD OF SMOKE.



FOR AN HOUR THEY CIRCLED WITHIN THE PROTECTIVE COVER.

"CAN'T HEAR IT,
SIR. I THINK HE'S
GIVEN UP!"

"WE CAN'T
KEEP THIS UP.
RESUME NORMAL
COURSE. BETTER
HAVE THE MEN AT
ACTION STATIONS
— JUST IN CASE!"



THEY EMERGED, GRATEFULLY, FROM THE SMOKE INTO BLUE AND EMPTY SKIES...

"THE OLD TUB'S STILL GOT A FEW TRICKS IN HER, SIR. YOU MUST HAVE HAD THAT JAP DIZZY LOOKING FOR US!"

"BETTER SEE TO THE MAN WHO WAS KILLED, MISTER BOWIE!"



THEY BURIED SIMMS IN UTTER SILENCE, WITH SUCH A SMALL CREW ABOARD THE TUG, THE LOSS OF EVEN ONE MAN WAS DEEPLY FELT.



AS SOON AS THE BODY SLID BENEATH THE WAVES, PRYDE SPOKE SHARPLY TO THE BIG AUSSIE.

YOUR RECENT ACTION HAS COST US HEAVILY IN FUEL, AND WE ONLY HAVE ENOUGH TO TAKE US TO THE ISLANDS AND NO FARTHER. I WILL HAVE TO WORK OUT OUR COURSE OF ACTION MOST CAREFULLY.



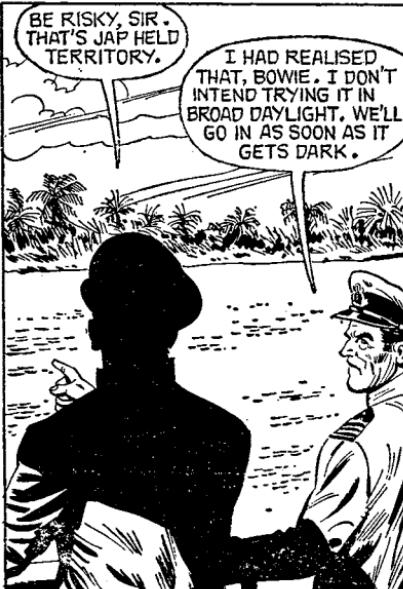
AN HOUR LATER . . .

WE HAVE TWO ALTERNATIVES, BOWIE! REDUCE SPEED TO SAVE FUEL AND RISK FALLING BEHIND OUR SCHEDULE. OR LAND TO GATHER ENOUGH WOOD TO MAKE UP FOR OUR LOSS.



BE RISKY, SIR. THAT'S JAP HELD TERRITORY.

I HAD REALISED THAT, BOWIE. I DON'T INTEND TRYING IT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT. WE'LL GO IN AS SOON AS IT GETS DARK.



IT WAS A TENSE MOMENT WHEN THE SHALLOW-DRAUGHT TUG SLOWLY NOSED TOWARDS THE SHORE.

STOP ENGINES.
STAND BY TO DROP ANCHOR.



BOWIE WAS FIRST ASHORE, A TOMMY GUN HELD READY IN HIS HAND.



HOW DOES IT LOOK ?
SEEMS QUIET, SIR.
NEVER CAN TELL WITH
THE JAPS, THOUGH. GOT
A HABIT OF SHOWING
WHEN YOU LEAST
EXPECT 'EM.



FOR AN HOUR THEY ALL WORKED FURIOUSLY, AND ALL THE TIME, BOWIE WAS ONLY TOO AWARE OF HOW THE NOISE CARRIED IN THE STILL NIGHT AIR.



BUT THERE WAS NO REACTION FROM THE ENEMY AND EVEN BOWIE RELAXED A LITTLE. HE DID NOT HEAR THE BUSHES PART, OR THE FAINT CLICK OF SAFETY CATCHES BEING RELEASED.



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES THE JAP SOLDIERS WATCHED. THEN AS BOWIE AND HIS LOGGING PARTY PREPARED TO LEAVE, THEY SUDDENLY APPEARED.



IN ONE SWIFT MOVEMENT, BOWIE FLUNG THE AXE SIDEWAYS, KNOCKING THE RIFLE FROM ONE JAP'S HANDS.



THE FIRST MAN WAS QUICKLY OVERPOWERED, BUT AS THE SECOND TRIED TO ESCAPE ALONG THE BEACH . . .



THEY QUICKLY BOUND AND GAGGED THE TWO JAPS . . .



AS THEY FLOATED THE LOGS OUT TO THE TUG, BILL RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM PRYDE.



BUT IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE. A GROUP OF JAPS DASHED OUT OF THE TREES AND ONE MAN WENT DOWN IN THEIR FIRST BURST OF FIRE.

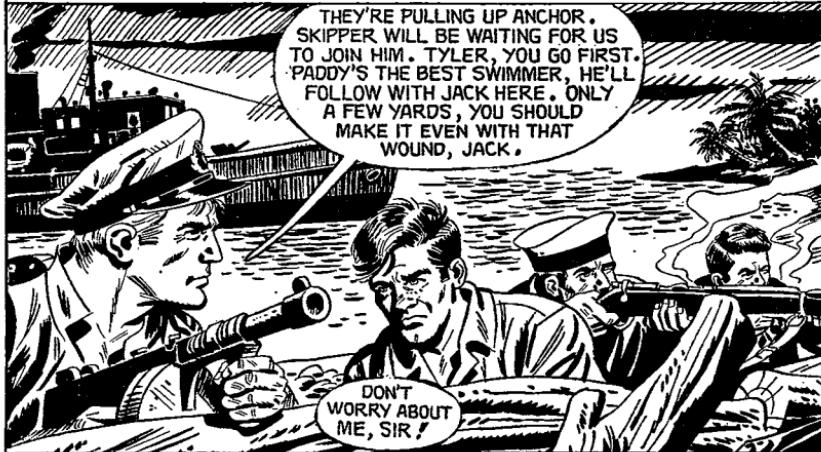
CAPTAIN'S ALWAYS
BEEN KEEN TO USE THAT
FLAMING GUN. WHY DON'T
HE OPEN UP NOW?



FOR SEVERAL MINUTES, THERE WAS AN EXCHANGE OF SMALL ARMS FIRE. THEN BOWIE HEARD THE RATTLE OF CHAINS FROM THE TUG.

THEY'RE PULLING UP ANCHOR.
SKIPPER WILL BE WAITING FOR US
TO JOIN HIM. TYLER, YOU GO FIRST.
PADDY'S THE BEST SWIMMER, HE'LL
FOLLOW WITH JACK HERE. ONLY
A FEW YARDS, YOU SHOULD
MAKE IT EVEN WITH THAT
WOUND, JACK.

DON'T
WORRY ABOUT
ME, SIR!



BOWIE WAITED UNTIL THE FIRST MAN REACHED THE WATER, THEN MOTIONED THE TWO OTHERS TO FOLLOW.

KEEP YOUR
HEADS DOWN.
GOOD LUCK.

DON'T
HANG ON TOO
LONG, SIR.



BOWIE GAVE THEM A FULL MINUTE THEN MADE HIS OWN ESCAPE BID.

A FEW YARDS FROM SHORE HE CAUGHT UP WITH THE OTHERS, AND MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY.



Chapter 3. ESCAPE OR DIE

BY CLINGING TO THEIR FELLED LOGS, THE FOUR MEN MANAGED TO PADDLE OUT OF RANGE OF THE JAPS ON THE BEACH. THE CURRENT TOOK THEM DOWN THE COAST.

HOLD ON, JACK. WE'LL PULL INSHORE AROUND THE NEXT POINT. SHOULD BE SAFE ENOUGH, I RECKON.



THEY CAME ASHORE ABOUT A MILE FARTHER UP THE COAST.

TOLD YOU WE'D MAKE IT. SOON HAVE THAT LEG OF YOURS PATCHED UP, MATE!





FOR TWO HOURS THEY MOVED CAUTIOUSLY ALONG THE BEACH AND WITH EACH STEP,
BOWIE FELT THE WOUNDED MAN GROW HEAVIER.

JACK'S OUT
ON HIS FEET, SIR.
WHY DON'T WE REST
FOR A BIT?

HE'S GOT A FEVER—
MUST GET HIM SOME
MEDICAL AID. KEEP GOING.
HAS TO BE A VILLAGE
NEAR HERE!



AN HOUR BEFORE SUNRISE, JUST AS THEY HAD ALMOST GIVEN UP HOPE, THEY SIGHTED
A SMALL HARBOUR ...

BOATS, SIR!

TOLD YOU WE'D STRIKE
SOMETHING. BUT WE'LL HAVE
TO DO THIS CAREFULLY. YOU TAKE
JACK UP TO THE POINT. PADDY AND
I WILL TRY TO SNATCH THAT
SMALL BOAT AND PICK
YOU UP, OKAY?



BOWIE AND PADDY REACHED THE FIRST BUILDING WITHOUT INCIDENT.

HOLD IT. COUPLE OF SENTRY'S COMING THIS WAY. BETTER GO AROUND THE OTHER SIDE.



AT THE REAR OF THE WOODEN HUT, THEY FOUND A DOOR. BOWIE TRIED IT.

IT'S OPEN! COME ON, THERE MIGHT BE SOME MEDIC STUFF FOR JACK INSIDE.

BUT, LIEUTENANT...



BUT THE HUT DID NOT CONTAIN MEDICAL SUPPLIES . ABOUT TWENTY JAP SOLDIERS WERE USING IT AS A BILLET.



SILENTLY THEY PICKED UP A MACHINE GUN AND RIFLE. BUT AS THEY MADE FOR THE DOOR AGAIN A LARGE FIGURE BARRED THEIR EXIT.



THE JAP HAD JUST COME OFF DUTY. HE WAS SLEEPY AND TOO SLOW TO AVOID THE BLOW THAT CAUGHT HIS CHIN SQUARELY.

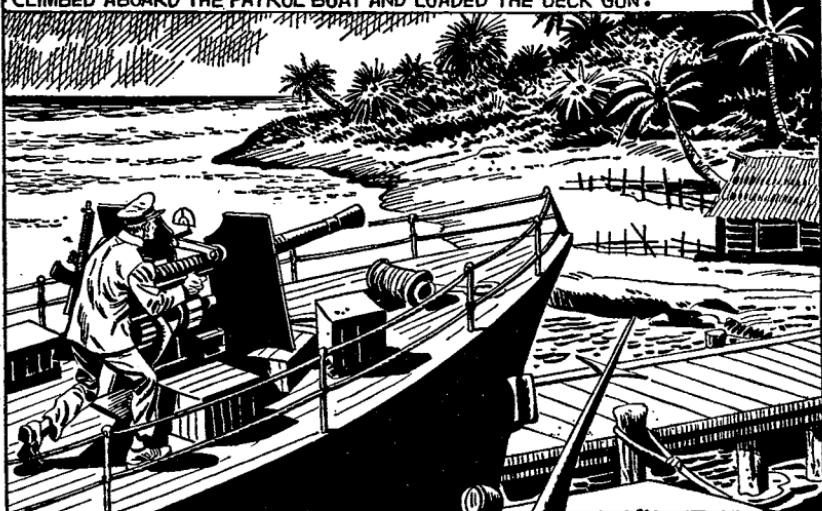
PLEASANT DREAMS,
FELLER! PUT HIM DOWN
GENTLY, PADDY! DON'T
WANT TO WAKE
HIS PALS!



WE'LL TAKE THE
LAUNCH! YOU GET ABOARD
AND CHECK THE FUEL. I'VE
GOT AN IDEA.



AS PADDY LEAPED INTO THE LAUNCH AND VANISHED INTO ITS CABIN, BOWIE CLIMBED ABOARD THE PATROL BOAT AND LOADED THE DECK GUN.



NEXT MOMENT, BOWIE EXPERTLY SIGHTED THE GUN AND POURED A STREAM OF TRACER SHELLS INTO THE WOODEN BUILDINGS ASHORE WITH DEVASTATING EFFECT.



BUT SUDDENLY, A MOVEMENT BEHIND BOWIE, MADE PADDY SPRING INTO ACTION...



AS MORE FIGURES RACED ON DECK, BOWIE SWUNG THE DECK GUN AROUND AND FIRED AT POINT-BLANK RANGE . . .

PADDY! CAST
OFF AND GET THAT
ENGINE GOING!

AGHH!



THE LAUNCH'S ENGINE SPRANG TO LIFE — AND BOWIE LEAPED FOR ITS DECK.



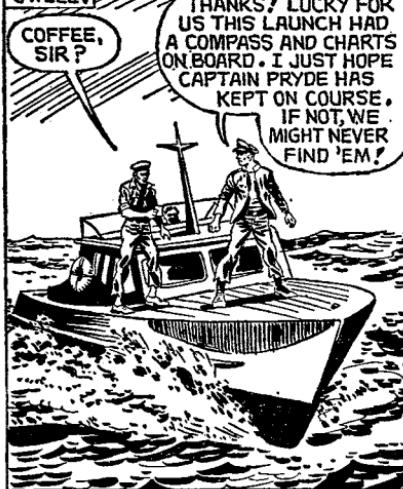
AS THEY REACHED THE MOUTH OF THE INLET, BOWIE ORDERED PADDY TO HEAD FOR THE SHORE . . .



WITHIN MINUTES, THEY HAD PICKED UP THE OTHER TWO MEN, AND WERE RACING FOR THE OPEN SEA . . .



BY DAWN, THEY WERE WELL OUT IN THE PACIFIC, PLOUGHING THROUGH A HEAVY SWELL . . .



TWO HOURS LATER, THEY SPOTTED SMOKE ON THE HORIZON. AS THEY GOT CLOSER, THEY RECOGNISED THE LINES OF THE PARRY.

IT'S THE TUG, SIR!
ALMOST IN THE EXACT
POSITION YOU WORKED OUT
ON THOSE CHARTS.

BETTER MAKE
A SIGNAL BEFORE
THE CAPTAIN TURNS
THE GUN ON US!



THE THREE WEARY MEN WERE HAULED
ON BOARD THE TUG...

WHAT HAPPENED?
WHERE ON EARTH DID YOU
GET THAT LAUNCH? WE'D
GIVEN YOU UP!



SURE YOU
HAD, SIR. YOU DIDN'T
GIVE US MUCH CHANCE
LAST NIGHT, EITHER,
DID YOU, SIR?

BOWIE'S SCATHING COMMENT STUNG
CAPTAIN PRYDE.

I COULDN'T SEE A THING IN
THE DARK, AND WITH ALL THAT
SHOOTING I THOUGHT THE JAPS
MUST HAVE GOT YOU, I DIDN'T
WANT TO RISK LOSING THE
SHIP, BOWIE. I HAD TO
PUSH ON WITH OUR
MISSION.

YES,
SIR!



Chapter 4. SHIPWRECKED

FOR DAYS THEY STEAMED ACROSS THE VAST PACIFIC WITHOUT SIGHTING ANOTHER SHIP, BUT THEN . . .



BOWIE NEVER BELIEVED THE JAPS WOULD IGNORE THEM. A SMALL TUG SO FAR OUT WAS BOUND TO AROUSE CURIOSITY.



WE CAN'T GIVE UP NOW. THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WE CAN DO!

UNLESS WE CAN TAKE WINGS AND FLY, WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, BOWIE? TRY TO OUT-RUN HER—AT SEVEN KNOTS? OR SHOOT IT OUT?

ONLY A FOOL WOULD TRY EITHER, CAPTAIN. BUT THERE'S ONE CHANCE—AN OLD TRICK WE USED TO PLAY ON THE NATIVES. IT MIGHT JUST FOOL THE NIPS!

BUT BOWIE'S IDEA DID NOT APPEAL TO THE CONCEITED CAPTAIN . . .

YOU DON'T SERIOUSLY EXPECT US TO RUB THAT FILTHY SMELLING STUFF OVER OUR BODIES? UGH! I'D RATHER BE TAKEN PRISONER!

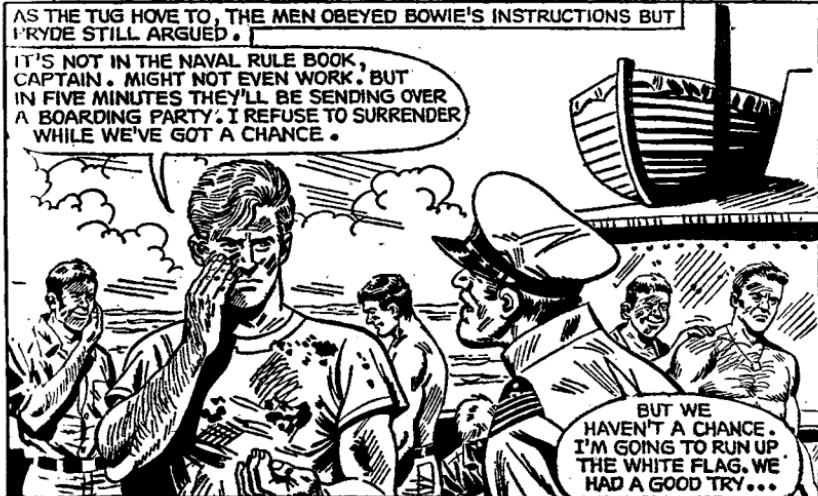
NOT ME, CAPTAIN.

THE TRICK IS TO SMEAR ON THE GREASE THINLY, SMOOTH LIKE, THAT WAY IT MAKES THE SKIN LOOK REALLY YELLOW. TOO THICK AND THE SUN WILL HAVE IT RUNNING DOWN YOUR CHEEKS!



AS THE TUG HOE TO, THE MEN OBEYED BOWIE'S INSTRUCTIONS BUT I'RYDE STILL ARGUED . . .

IT'S NOT IN THE NAVAL RULE BOOK, CAPTAIN. MIGHT NOT EVEN WORK. BUT IN FIVE MINUTES THEY'LL BE SENDING OVER A BOARDING PARTY. I REFUSE TO SURRENDER WHILE WE'VE GOT A CHANCE . . .



BUT WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE. I'M GOING TO RUN UP THE WHITE FLAG. WE HAD A GOOD TRY . . .

BEFORE PRYDE COULD SAY ANYTHING MORE,
A FLASHING FIST SLAMMED ON TO HIS
JAW .



BOWIE SLUNG PRYDE OVER HIS
SHOULDER AND STARTED TO GO
BELOW . . .



BOWIE LEFT THE UNCONSCIOUS CAPTAIN ON HIS BUNK , WITH THE CABIN DOOR
LOCKED .



A LONG BOAT FROM THE JAP DESTROYER BUMPED AGAINST THE TUG'S STERN AND AN OFFICER HAULED HIMSELF OVER THE SIDE . HE STARED AT THE YELLOW-STAINED FIGURES WITH BEWILDERMENT .



WHEN THE OFFICER VENTURED ON TO THE DECK, BOWIE STAGGERED TOWARDS HIM.



THE JAP HAD SEEN ENOUGH.

PULL AWAY! THEY
ALL HAVE SOME DISEASE.
BACK TO THE SHIP
AT ONCE!



YOU'RE A STAR TURN,
SIR! DID YOU SEE THAT
OFFICER'S FACE? THOUGHT
I'D BURST OUT LAUGHING!

DON'T LAUGH TOO SOON,
MATE. WE HAVE TO KEEP LOW
TILL WE SEE WHAT THEY'LL DO
NEXT. THEY MAY TAKE IT INTO
THEIR HEADS TO USE US FOR
TARGET PRACTICE!



BUT THE JAPS DECIDED THE TUG WAS NOT WORTH WASTING SHELLS ON. AS THE DESTROYER STEAMED AWAY AT FULL SPEED, BOWIE HAD PRYDE REVIVED AND RELEASED FROM HIS CABIN.

SORRY ABOUT THAT, SIR. BUT IT WAS WORTH IT. THAT OLD DODGE HASN'T FAILED YET!

YOU'LL BE A LOT SORRIER IF WE EVER GET BACK, MISTER BOWIE. YOU KNOW THE PENALTY FOR STRIKING A SUPERIOR OFFICER? CONSIDER YOURSELF UNDER OPEN ARREST.



PRYDE'S ACTION WENT DOWN BADLY WITH THE CREW. ONLY BOWIE SEEMED TO TAKE IT ALL CALMLY.

HERE'S YOUR SUPPER, SIR, AND JUST THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW ME AN' THE LADS, WELL— WERE ALL BEHIND YOU!



THANKS, PADDY, BUT DON'T JUDGE THE CAPTAIN TOO HARD. THIS IS HIS FIRST COMMAND— HE'S GOT A LOT TO LEARN.

NEXT MORNING, WHEN BILL AWOKE, HE REALISED THE TUG HAD STOPPED. GOING ON DECK HE FOUND A VERY CONCERNED CAPTAIN PRYDE.

THE INFERNAL ENGINES! THEY'VE PACKED UP, LIKE EVERYTHING ON BOARD, THEY'RE UNRELIABLE - WE'LL NEVER GET THEM REPAIRED IN TIME TO REACH THE ISLANDS BY THE FOURTEENTH.



AS THE HOT SUN BEAT DOWN ON TO THE TUG, THE CONFINED SPACE OF THE ENGINE ROOM WAS LIKE AN OVEN.

PHEW! DANCING DINGOS - WHAT WOULDN'T I GIVE FOR A BATH IN THE ANTARCTIC!

THIS IS NO TIME FOR JOKES, MISTER BOWIE!



IT WAS A LONG, TOUGH JOB. THE WHOLE DAY HAD PASSED BEFORE BOWIE AND THE TWO STOKERS HEAVED THEIR WEARY BODIES OUT TO REPORT SUCCESS.

GOOD WORK! LET'S HOPE WE CAN MAKE UP TIME! START ENGINES! FULL SPEED!



IT HAD NOW BECOME A RACE AGAINST SOMETHING EVEN MORE RELENTLESS THAN THE JAPANESE — TIME!

WE CAN'T KEEP UP THAT PRESSURE, SIR. THOSE OLD BOILERS MIGHT NOT TAKE IT.



SOON, BOWIE AND THE MEN BEGAN RIPPING UP EVERYTHING THAT WOULD KEEP THE BOILERS GOING. PRYDE FOR ONCE APPROVED OF BOWIE'S ACTION.

WELL DONE, BOWIE. MUSTN'T LOSE STEAM NOW, BUT IT WILL TAKE AN AWFUL LOT OF WOOD.



FOR THREE DAYS THEY CHOPPED UP EVERYTHING THAT WOULD BURN, REDUCING THE TUG TO A METAL SHELL. BUT IT PROVED WORTH IT.

WE'VE SPOTTED 'EM.
THE ISLANDS ARE
IN SIGHT!



THAT'S THEM,
ALL RIGHT,
SIR.

WE'LL MOVE IN
SOON AS IT GETS
DARK.



AS THE TENSION OF THE LAST FEW
HECTIC DAYS RELAXED, CAPTAIN PRYDE
RESUMED HIS COLD AND IMPERSONAL
COMMAND.

THOSE REEFS CAN
BE TRICKY, SPECIALLY
AT NIGHT, CAPTAIN.
I KNOW THESE WATERS.
BETTER LET ME TAKE
HER IN !

YOU ARE NO
LONGER MY
NUMBER ONE
AND ARE STILL
UNDER OPEN
ARREST, MISTER
BOWIE, RETURN
TO YOUR CABIN!

ANGER WELLED UP INSIDE BILL AND HE
MOVED MENACINGLY TOWARDS HIS
SUPERIOR OFFICER.

IF YOU ATTEMPT TO STRIKE ME AGAIN,
BOWIE, I SWEAR I'LL SHOOT. AND
I SHOULD BE QUITE JUSTIFIED ---

ALL RIGHT, HAVE IT YOUR WAY ---
BUT YOU'RE A FOOL, PRYDE ---
A FOOL WHO'S GAMBLING
WITH MEN'S LIVES!



WHEN DARKNESS FELL, CAPTAIN PRYDE STEERED THE PARROT IN HIMSELF. THIS WAS HIS CHANCE OF GLORY.

HOLD HER STEADY...
STEADY ...



LIKE EVERY OTHER MEMBER OF THE CREW, BOWIE WAS KEYED UP FOR THE FINAL PART OF THE MISSION. BUT THE SUDDEN CRUNCH OF GRINDING METAL SENT HIM REELING VIOLENTLY FROM HIS BUNK.



BY THE TIME HE REACHED THE TOP DECK THE PARRY WAS SINKING FAST.

THAT CRAZY FOOL! HE'S RIPPED
THE BOTTOM OUT ON THE ROCKS —
JUST WHEN WE WERE NEARLY
THERE!

MAKE SURE
EVERYONE GETS
OFF, PADDY!





CAPTAIN PRYDE WAS A DAZED AND BROKEN MAN.

I FAILED! JUST WHEN WE WERE SO CLOSE.
I FAILED ...

COME ON,
SIR - YOU CAN
DO NO GOOD
HERE!

BOWIE HAD TO TAKE PRYDE FORCIBLY ASHORE.

YOU SHOULD HAVE LEFT HIM. LEFT HIM TO GO DOWN WITH HIS SHIP!

BELAY THAT TALK. JUST HELP ME WITH HIM!

IN SILENCE, THEY WATCHED THE **PARRY** GO DOWN. FOR CAPTAIN PRYDE, IT WAS THE END OF A DREAM. HIS LIFE HAD SUDDENLY LOST ALL PURPOSE.



TWO HOURS LATER, BOWIE AND SIX NATIVES WERE PADDLING SILENTLY ACROSS THE WIDE ENCLOSED BAY, HEADING FOR A DESTROYER.



FORTUNATELY THERE WERE NO SENTRIES ON BOARD, THE JAPS FELT NO NEED OF THEM IN THAT AREA OF THE PACIFIC. FINDING HIS WAY TO THE DEPTH CHARGES, BOWIE AND THE NATIVES LOWERED TWO OF THE DEADLY CANISTERS OVER THE SIDE.



CAREFULLY LOADING THE CYLINDERS OF HIGH EXPLOSIVE ON THE CANOES, BOWIE GUIDED HIS FRIENDS TO A SPOT ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ISLAND WHERE HE KNEW THE CREW WOULD BE. HE QUICKLY EXPLAINED HIS PLAN TO PRYDE WHO WAS PATHETICALLY EAGER TO HELP.



THEY WORKED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. AT LAST THEY SET THE TRAP. GENTLY THEY LOWERED THE DEPTH CHARGES INTO THE WAVES. THEN TWO OF THE NATIVES DIVED DOWN AND SECURED ROPE TO THE ROCKS ON THE SEA BED.

THE ROPES WILL HOLD THEM JUST BELOW THE SURFACE.

THE HULL OF THE FIRST SHIP TO COME THROUGH THIS CHANNEL MUST HIT THEM. SHE'LL GO DOWN LIKE A STONE, BLOCKING THE EXIT! THEY'LL BE TRAPPED—THEN OUR BOYS'LL PICK 'EM OFF LIKE COCONUTS AT A FAIRGROUND!



THEY FINISHED JUST AS DAWN WAS BREAKING. BOWIE THANKED THE ISLANDERS AND AGAIN THEY WERE ON THEIR OWN.

WELL, ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS WAIT. WE'D BETTER MOVE OUT OF SIGHT.



BOWIE SETTLED DOWN FOR REST. IT SEEMED HE WAS ASLEEP FOR ONLY SECONDS WHEN A HAND SHOOK HIM ROUGHLY.

THEY'RE RAISING STEAM, MISTER BOWIE! MUST HAVE BEEN WARNED THAT OUR TASK FORCE IS APPROACHING.



AS THEY WAITED ANXIOUSLY FOR THE LEADING DESTROYER TO REACH THE SPOT WHERE THE DEPTH CHARGES WERE CONCEALED, PRYDE SUDDENLY GAVE A CRY OF DISMAY.

THE TIDE!
WE FORGOT THE
TIDE!

WHAT'S HE
ON ABOUT,
LIEUTENANT?

GRIEF!
HE'S RIGHT!

WHEN WE SECURED THE ROPES TO THOSE ROCKS ON THE BOTTOM THEY WERE JUST LONG ENOUGH TO HOLD THE CHARGES ONLY A FEW FEET BELOW THE SURFACE. BUT IT'S HIGH TIDE NOW. THOSE SHIPS WILL PASS RIGHT OVER THE CHARGES! I'VE MUFFED IT!



IT WAS SEVERAL MOMENTS BEFORE ANY OF THEM REALISED THAT PRYDE HAD GONE.

THE FOOL! COME
BACK, SIR! YOU CAN'T
DO ANYTHING!



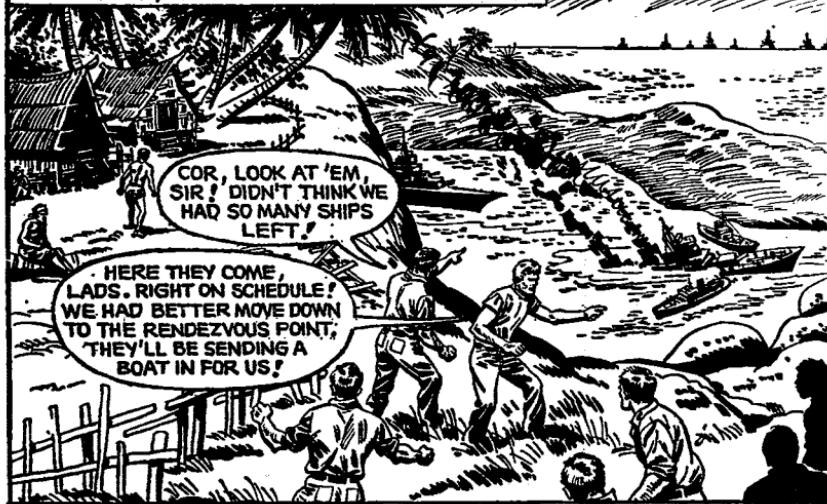


THE CHARGE FLOATED UP AND HIT THE DESTROYER'S HULL. THE EXPLOSION SET OFF THE SECOND CHARGE, WHICH ALMOST BLEW THE SHIP IN TWO.



CAPTAIN PRYDE HAD REDEEMED HIS ERROR, BUT IT HAD COST HIM HIS LIFE IN DOING SO.

FOR TWO DAYS THE JAPS WORKED FRANTICALLY TO CLEAR THE NARROW CHANNEL. ON THE THIRD, THE ALLIED TASK FORCE APPEARED.



UNABLE TO BY PASS THE WRECK OF THE DESTROYER, THE JAP SHIPS WERE HELPLESS INSIDE THE BAY. FOR THREE HOURS, THE ALLIED FLEET BOMBARED THEM WITH A RAIN OF STEEL.



AS FOR LIEUTENANT BOWIE, AT HIS OWN REQUEST HE REVERTED TO HIS PREVIOUS RANK— AND WAS A HAPPY MAN AGAIN.

ADVANCE-AND DIE!

WHEN THE GERMANS LAUNCHED THEIR BIG COUNTER-OFFENSIVE THREE WEEKS AFTER D-DAY, IT BURST IN FULL FURY ON THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN ARMIES EAST OF ST. LO...



A TORNADO OF FIRE FELL ON THE VITAL CORBISEY RIDGE...



THE BATTALION HAD BEEN FIGHTING FOR THREE DAYS WITHOUT REST, AND HAD BEEN AWAITING RELIEF WHEN THE BLOW FELL...

ONE COMPANY SOON LOST ALL ITS OFFICERS AND PLATOON SERGEANTS. YOUNG CORPORAL DANNY JESSOP WAS ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVORS...



FOR A LONG HOUR THE BATTERED TROOPS CLUNG TO THE RIDGE, BUT AT LAST A TIGER TANK LUMBERED FORWARD...



THE MEN WAVERED, THEN TRIED BEYOND ENDURANCE, THEY BEGAN TO FALL BACK...



ONLY WHEN HE SEEMED TO BE THE ONLY ONE LEFT DID THE YOUNG CORPORAL FOLLOW THEM.

FLIPPIN' SHOWER I FANCY RUNNING LIKE THAT...



THE ONE THING NEEDED AT THAT MOMENT WAS LEADERSHIP — AND IT CAME FROM AN UNEXPECTED QUARTER...

HEY ! HAVE YOU GUYS LOST YOUR WAY ? YOU'RE HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION !



DANNY JESSOP FELT RELIEVED AS THE BEWILDERED SURVIVORS HALTED IN THEIR TRACKS...

COME ON, YOU BLOKES ! WE CAN'T LET A YANK WATCH US RUN AWAY !



THE CORPORAL'S WORDS STUNG THEM. THEY TURNED...



DANNY WAS CLOSE ENOUGH NOW TO SEE THE AMERICAN'S FACE. IT WAS HAGGARD AND BATTLE-SCARRED...



THE LIEUTENANT HURRIEDLY ORGANISED A COUNTER-ATTACK ON THE RIDGE...



UNDER COVER OF THE SMOKE THEY
ADVANCED UP THE SLOPE...



THEY FOUGHT THEIR WAY INTO THE
WOOD, THE AMERICAN LIEUTENANT
AT THEIR HEAD...



THE LIEUTENANT SEEMED SCORNFUL OF DEATH. WHEN HIS
AUTOMATIC WAS EMPTY HE STARTED HURLING GRENADES...



THEN FROM THE FLANK CAME THE DEAFENING CRACK OF A TANK GUN, AND A TIGER GROUND FORWARD...



THE AMERICAN LIEUTENANT SAW THE DANGER AND RAN FORWARD, WITH A PIAT. AS HE DID SO, A BULLET SLAMMED INTO HIM...



EVEN AS HE FELL, HE BROUGHT THE PIAT TO HIS SHOULDER...



AS THE FLAMES ENVELOPED
THE TANK ANOTHER BULLET
FOUND ITS MARK...



THE RIDGE WAS HELD. AFTERWARDS
THE AMERICANS WERE TOLD OF THE
LIEUTENANT'S EXPLOIT, AND CAME
TO CLAIM HIS BODY...



TWO DAYS LATER THE AFFAIR WAS DISCUSSED AT THE
HEADQUARTERS OF THE U.S. 29th DIVISION...

WE MUST KEEP QUIET ABOUT THE FULL TRUTH.
LOOK AT THE FACTS. CARSE BROKE ON OMAHA
BEACH, WAS COURT-MARTIALLED AND SENTENCED
TO DEATH. THEN HE ESCAPES, AND HEADS FOR
THE FRONT, TO DIE A HERO'S DEATH...



WELL, I THINK WE CAN HANDLE THIS.
ALL THE PEOPLE BACK HOME NEED
KNOW IS THAT HE WAS KILLED IN
ACTION AND GIVEN THE MILITARY
CROSS BY THE BRITISH.

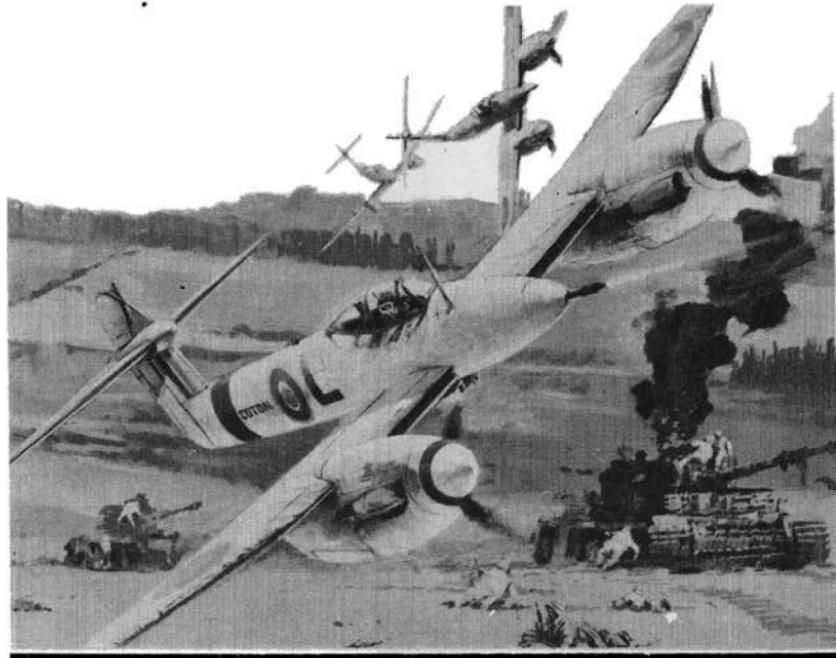


THERE'S SOMETHING
ELSE THEY'LL NEVER
KNOW! THAT THE
GENERAL REFUSED
TO CONFIRM THE
SENTENCE, BUT
THAT ORDER CAME
AFTER YOUNG
CARSE ESCAPED. HE
NEVER KNEW THAT
HE'D BEEN REPRIEVED!



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